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WHIRRAKEE

March 2006

Vol. 27 No. 2

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
Address for correspondence: PO Box 396, Bendigo 3552
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	(an assistant's position for the syllabus organiser is still vacant)		
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Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $34; Family $40; Concession: Single $28.50; Family $34. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $34.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The invited speaker at general meetings starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper.
If a workshop is held prior to the meeting, it will be advertised and it usually starts at 7.00pm.
The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Ben Goonan, Richard Goonan, Bill Holsworth, Rob Moors, Rod Orr, Bob Ruddick, Darren White.

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. In addition to local excursions, campouts are held several times each year, usually coinciding with long weekends or holiday periods.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has one active group that meets regularly (the Fauna Study Group) and other groups that meet at irregular intervals.

Fauna Study Group: meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.

Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (5439 5710)
Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (5443 4063)
Equipment Officer: Maurie Lewis (0407 427179)

Bird Observers Group: This group has field excursions and the occasional lecture evening. Please consult the *Whirrakee* for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5449 3479.
To propose meetings or excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

Front cover photo?...see bottom of page 2.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club
Vol. 27, No. 2, March 2006
Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles. Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received more than one week after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's Note
The excursion to Mt Buffalo must have been a wonderful experience, judging by the amount of positive feedback (and the very impressive numbers of birds and plants mentioned in the two reports). And the opportunities keep coming……Richard has planned another excursion to Lerdederg Gorge (see page 3). Our next speaker at the general meeting also has a great reputation. Neville Rosengren will talk about a VIC roads project which involved relocating our largest (or longest?) invertebrate. Some of you may have seen this animal on the opening program of the new and fantastic series by David Attenborough 'Life in the Undergrowth'. It was on for a full minute or so (!), so if you want to know more, come to the March general meeting.

Front Cover Photographs – Photographer: Rod Orr
Where the vegetation had been burnt, along the track down to Rollason's Falls (left photo), there had been an impressive amount of *Acacia* regeneration from seed. Nothing was flowering or even in bud so we had to work to identify several unfamiliar species. The photo on the right shows the phyllodes of *Acacia obliquinervia* (Mountain Hickory Wattle). Their asymmetry is very obvious, with the single main vein much closer to one edge of the phyllode. At first glance you might think that you were looking at the juvenile leaves of a Snow Gum but when you crush a small part of the 'leaf' there is no eucalyptus smell at all, so it's fairly easy to distinguish them.

Short Notices

Plastic Pots/Tubes needed

Members of the Harcourt Valley Landcare group are germinating local progeny casuarinas and eucalyptus for their revegetation projects. They have been so successful in this that they have run out of pots.

If you have any spares cluttering up your shed, you could consider donating them to this worthy cause.

Please contact Sabine Wilkens (54432797) if you can help.

Post Script on Willie Wagtails

(follow-on from January/February *Whirrakee*)

... the willies successfully reared another three in nest number three, back at the original site, repeating same behaviour ...recycling the 2nd nest.

Error in Chris Tzaros' Wildlife Book

'Wildlife of the Box-Ironbark Country' Copies are still available for $30.00 from Bill Holsworth.

Please note:

Error correction on pages 184-185.

Most users of the book will have noticed that the numbered sites listed do not match the numbers on the map. This error occurred in the final stages of printing, but a correct map and legend is available on the CSIRO website. Go to

http://www.publish.csiro.au/pid/4856.htm

Bill has made a few black and white copies of the corrected map for those who do not have access to a computer.

The next Excursion: – Lerdederg Gorge March 11 by Richard Goonan

Lerdederg Gorge is another journey into the mountains. This time the Central highlands region of Victoria usually associated with the Wombat Forest, Mt Macedon or the Cobaw Ranges. Lerdederg is located on the southern slopes of the Great Dividing Range and therefore slightly different to the Wombat forest, that is more generally on the northern slopes, and therefore drier. This large area of forest sweeps across from Daylesford in the north west to Macedon / Gisborne in the east, with Bacchus Marsh to the south. The topography of the area is dominated by the Lerdederg River, that flows south into the Werribee River near Bacchus Marsh. The area is habitat for the Greater Glider and Powerful Owl.

The vegetation is described in the Flora of Victoria (Vol 1 Introduction) as Wet Sclerophyll forest with Manna Gum (*Euc viminalis*), Messmate (*Euc obliqua*) and Peppermint (*Euc radiata*) dominant on wetter sites. The understorey is largely Silver wattle (*Ac dealbata*), Blackwood (*Ac melanoxylon*), Sheoak (*Allocasurina verticillata*), *Bursaria spinosa*, Shiny Cassinia (*Cassinia longifolia*), Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*), *Hakea*, *Leptospermum*, Hazel Pomaderris (*Pomaderris aspera*) Christmas bush (*Prostanthera lasianthos*) and Round-leaved Mint-bush (*Prostanthera rotundifolia*), with *Poa* spp on drier more open slopes.

Leaving 8am sharp, please meet at Golden Square approximately 7:45am. The general outline of the day will include morning tea around Blackwood, before heading to the river for walking. After lunch along the river near the bus, we may walk some higher ground out of the river valley, before heading back around 2pm for a tea stop along the way, to be in Bendigo around 4pm. Please remember to let me know if you intend to come (0423418815).

Mt Buffalo Excursion 11.2.2006

By Jan Orr

It was a perfect day. The weather was warm with a light cool breeze and every one was on time for a 7:00am start to the first excursion in 2006. We stopped at Oxley to pick up Patrick Ward who knows Mt Buffalo very well and was to be our guide. At 11:00am we were having morning tea at the Rollason's Falls picnic area.

This was my second trip to Mt Buffalo this summer. I spent 3 days there in January when I was taking part in the Australian Naturalist Network Alpine Camp, so I was prepared for the visual impact of the damaging 2003 fires. However I was delighted by the sounds of woodland birds in this part of the forest. The places we visited in January were largely silent except for yellow faced honeyeaters, pied curra-wongs, little ravens and spotted and striated pardalotes. The Rollason's Falls valley seemed to have escaped intense burning and the trees still had canopy growth, as a result Anne Bridley and I were able to come away with this bird list:

-crimson rosella
-white throated tree-creeper
-spotted and striated pardalote
-magpie
-yellow-faced honeyeater
-white-naped honeyeater
-grey shrike-thrush
-grey fantail
-striated thornbill
-brown-headed honeyeater
-superb fairy-wren
-brown thornbill
-red wattle-bird
-black-faced cuckoo-shrike
-pied currawong
-eastern spinebill
-grey butcherbird
-lyrebird
-eastern yellow robin
-silvereye
-kookaburra
-scarlet robin

There was a small amount of water going over the falls but we could easily see that these falls must be spectacular after heavy rain or during snow melt periods. The rocks were polished to a smooth surface and there was a lovely pool beneath the falls.

We drove on to Lake Catani for lunch and to look at the Austral Ladies Tresses (*Spiranthes sinensis*) orchids that were growing in the swampy ground at the waters edge. Rod Orr noticed that these orchids differed from the spiranthes he had seen elsewhere in that the flowers did not spiral around the stem. There were only a few tiny plants and they were growing very close to a canoe launching area and were probably overlooked by the hundreds of visitors to the lake throughout the summer.

I was able to add to my bird list:

-white-eared honeyeater
-black duck

The ducks were desperate for me to share my lunch with them and this prompted an interesting discussion amongst us as to why we need to feed wild animals and what harm does this practice really do.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in the Cresta area. Some of us walked to the Dicksons Falls and others spent the time looking for plants and invertebrates in the marshy bogs. I had seen flame robins on my previous visit in January so I was keen to find out if they were still here or had started their migration down to lower altitudes. They were not calling like they were in January but there were brown birds.

More additions to the bird list:

-welcome swallow
-pipit
-flame robin
-kestrel
-tree martin
-white-browed scrub-wren

(Anne Bridley walked to Dicksons Falls and heard an olive whistler, which made me envious.)

On the return trip to Bendigo we stopped for fuel at Myrtleford and while we were all stretching our legs a little eagle flew slowly towards us to check us out. It then circled overhead to allow the low rays of the sun to shine on its lovely under-wing markings.

My bird watching day was not quite over as we stopped at a picnic spot on the King River, just outside Milawa and there I saw:
-yellow rosella
-willy-wagtail
-eastern rosella
-sulphur-crested cockatoo
-white-plumed honeyeater
-little friarbird
-straw-necked ibis
-black-faced cuckoo-shrike
Patrick told us that platypus had been seen recently in this stretch of river and that dollar birds nest in hollows in the red gums that are growing along the bank.

As you can see from my report my day was filled with bird watching. Others on the bus however, followed their own interests, but we all agreed that this was an excellent way to spend a Saturday.

Richard Goonan has planned excursions for each month of the year. I urge everyone to carefully read their February *Whirrakee* and mark the dates on their calendar. It is such a pleasant experience to visit natural places with people who are interested in learning about natural history.

Thank-you Richard for making this excursion possible and Patrick Ward for sharing his knowledge about this beautiful mountain.

Another Mt Buffalo Excursion Report

By Richard Goonan

As I stepped off the bus at the Rollason's Falls car park, for morning tea and our first walk, the aroma of eucalyptus and mountain air filled my nostrils. It was then that I knew the effort and angst gone into organising the excursion was worthwhile. After meeting at Golden Square for a 7am departure, we quickly loaded the bus and rolled out of town.

Heading North through Huntly and Goornong the journey to the mountains really began as we turned east toward Rushworth. Crossing the Campaspe shortly afterward, we continued across the former flood plain until the Camel Range. From Colbinabbin, the landscape is dominated by Grey Box (*Euc microcarpa*), until the Ironbark returns near Rushworth. Mallee wattle (*Ac montana*) is widespread through the forest and farming land along with Yellow Gum (*Euc leucoxylon*). Crossing the Goulburn River at Murchison, we headed east again through former flood plain and Greybox, Yellowbox (*Euc melliodora*) and Red Gum (*Euc cameldulensis*) country.

Between Murchison and Violet Town, Varnish Wattle (*Ac verniciflua*) starts to occur. From Violet Town we joined the Hume Hwy and turned North East, travelling between the flood plain of the Broken River around Benalla to the north, and the Strathbogie hills to the south. Climbing over a low range at Glenrowan marks a distinctive change in the landscape. Running almost north/south the Warby Ranges form the lower western boundary of the King River and Ovens River catchment. From the low range south of Glenrowan was our first view of the Mountains and particularly Mt Buffalo.

Leaving the Hwy just before Wangaratta, the Snow Road crosses the King River at Oxley, where we stopped briefly to pick up Patrick Ward. Until the recent dry period, much of this area is actively prone to flood. Apart from the few times the road leaves the river flats, Red Gums dominate. I really feel I have met the mountains, once I cross the Ovens at Gapsted where the river valley narrows considerably and the foothill forests of Peppermint (*Euc dives*, *Euc radiata*), Candlebark (*Euc rubida*), Stringybark (Euc macrorhyncha), and Red Box (*Euc polyanthemos*) rise steeply to form a mountainous landscape of striking spurs and ridges with deep river valleys.

Over the thirty kilometres from crossing the Ovens at Gapstead to where we started the climb up Mt Buffalo at Porpunkah, the rive changes considerably. Shallow and approximately twenty meters wide, it resembles a mountain creek and the banks are covered in thick vegetation such as *Bursaria spinosa* (flowering), *Lepto-spermum* spp and *Callistemon paludosus*.

We were heading for the Rollason's Falls walk, about half way up Mt Buffalo, where we stopped for morning tea. The area is relatively protected, supporting taller, moister vegetation (montane forest) such as Alpine Ash (*Euc delegatensis*); whereas the drier spurs and exposed slopes on the way up are heathy, supporting shorter trees and shrubs. The understorey was dominated by young Mountain Hickory Wattle (*Ac obliquinervia*) regrowth amongst scattered patches of other species, with wallaby grass on the drier areas. One tree that was particularly outstanding was an old *Ac obliquinervia* that must have survived many fires. It was quite literally a small tree (5m) with a solid trunk (20cm diameter) and a canopy of two meters. Similarly; in old Blackwood and other slow growing or long lived wattles (Lightwood, Willow wattle), it is unusual now to see such forms, they have either been cut or burnt. Like Wet Sclerophyll Rainforest patches on other parts of the ranges, the gully at Rollason's Falls exhibits signs of a fire refuge or shadow that is naturally protected and allows areas to remain unburnt for long periods, if ever. Although the fire came close and burnt all around, small areas such as where the old wattle and other species were, remain unburnt.

Another example of fire ecology was on the drier, steep slopes with low grassy understorey where Wild Cherry (*Exocarpus cupressiformis*), were still growing. These large trees were not regrowth; however the understorey and surrounding areas were burnt. Here the fire may have moved quickly at relatively low intensity, up slope leaving the cherry unaffected, which is usually susceptible to fire, and will die when burnt. Eucalypts nearby also demonstrated this because they were not setting epicormic shoots and the canopy was intact and growing normally.

Many species were regrowing from under ground shoots or seedlings that did not resemble their usual form. Holly and Forrest Lomatia (*Lomatia ilicifolia*, *Lomatia fraseri*) for example, were low shrubs to about 1.5 meters tall. These are usually tall shrubs to small trees.
Spyridium parvifolium or Dusty Miller was common throughout the understorey. Elderberry panax (*Polyscias sambucafolia*, fruiting) and Austral Indigo (*Indigofera australis*) were also present, but at far lower densities, and again were smaller shrubs.

Along the riparian zone perhaps two to three meters from the edge of the creek there were sections remaining unburnt, with tall, mature vegetation. Growing here the Prickly Coprosma (*Coprosma quadrifida*), was in fruit. To my surprise, I watched a Yellow Faced Honeyeater eating the berries. After picking off a fruit, it would hold it in its beak for a few seconds before swallowing, and then move on to the next branch with fruit. Also growing

along the creek were large Catkin Wattles (*Ac dallchiana*).

From Rollason's Falls, we headed up onto the plateau to stop in at lake Catani for lunch. Along the edge of the road from the moment we were into the Snow gum dominated alpine woodland atop the plateau, splashes of white daisies were eye catching

Very busy with campers and day visitors, the lake is a spectacular area, surrounded by various water plants and rushes on the edge and Snow gum (*Euc pauciflora*) woodland beyond. After lunch we were shown a small patch of Austral Ladies Tresses (*Spiranthes australis*) growing in the sphagnum moss and wet areas on the shoreline, adjacent to the day visitor car park.

After lunch our next walk was along the Dickson Falls Nature Trail, opposite Cresta Ski area. The cold air draining off the surrounding peaks and associated temperature inversion, where the air in the lower creek line is colder than the surrounding hills and subsequently inhibits tree growth, has created an open grassy plain. The track follows along the shallow gully to the edge of the plateau, from where the viewing platform allows spectacular views over the Buckland Valley to the east and across to the other alpine regions such as Mt Hotham and Falls Creek.

Formerly dominated by *Poa* spp and low heathy shrubs, the post fire vegetation of the plain was dominated by alpine spear grass. With a very long red/brown coloured awn *Austrostipa nivicola* (?) is a striking species. It seemed unusual to be surrounded by Spear Grass walking in an alpine area, a genus not usually dominant in such areas.

Unfortunately by now we were out of time and needed to head down the mountain. So the journey home began. Thank you to all those who made it along, and may the next visit to Mt Buffalo be equally successful.

Reports and Observations from the General Meeting held 8.2.2006

By Jan Orr

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1. Margaret Kane reported that blue-faced honey eaters have started visiting her garden in Flora Hill.

2. Sue and Katherine Fraser live adjacent to the Greater Bendigo National Park in Kennington and have a large number of birds using the birdbath in their backyard. Recently, bird alarm calls alerted Sue and Katherine to the presence of a small grey intruder in the yard. They were surprised and delighted to discover that they had a brush-tailed phascogale on the trunk of an iron-bark. They were intrigued that the animal was so active during the day.

Maurie Lewis reported that
3.1 Rob Mundy has seen mallee ring-neck parrots in the Spring Gully area for the past 6 weeks. The birds were feeding on wild oats.
3.2 Rainbow lorikeets have also been seen at Spring Gully recently.
3.3 There are a small group of pale-headed rosellas in the bush at the back of the White Hills cemetery. Several BFNC members visited the cemetery a week before Christmas and saw them. Inquiries have been made to discover if the birds are aviary escapees none of the bird breeders contacted know of any missing birds.

4. Bill Holsworth reported that the freckled ducks remained on Kennington Reservoir until late January and that the males were developing their red patches at the base of their bills, which is their breeding colouring. There has been no sighting of these birds during February.

5. Anne Bridley, for Ian Feneslau, reported that square-tailed kites are in the area. Anne herself recently saw a square-tailed kite at Junourton. This is only her 2nd

sighting of the bird for Junourton. Maurie Lewis added to the discussion that he has seen them at the tip at Eaglehawk.

6. Glenise Moors reported at her home in Sedgwick in January:
-A leaden flycatcher feeding fledged young
- Owlet nightjars visiting the nest-boxes near her house
- a dead juvenile sugar-glider in one part of a nest-box and other live young in the nest leaves at the back of the box.
- the tawny frogmouths appear to have been unsuccessful at raising young.
6.2 Report from the ANN January 2006 Alpine Camp
- Throughout the alpine areas she visited she noticed a marked reduction in bird species and overall bird numbers. The conclusion is that the avian recovery from the 2003 fires will take a lot of time.
- She caught a tiny frog in a boggy area near to Wallace's Hut on the Bogong High Plains. She took it back to their accommodation to be displayed in the education room. Some days later, she was able to release it in another wet area on the Bogong High Plains near the Heathy Spur Track. The frog was probably a common toadlet (*Ranidella signifera*) although it was too tiny for a positive identification.
- Rob and Glenise set up the BFNC bat trap at their accommodation in Harrietville on 8 consecutive nights. Overall 8 bats were caught and there was some debate about what species they were. The Little Forest Bat was considered the most likely candidate.
- Dr Dean Heinz from Latrobe University showed the ANN group several animals that his research students had captured as part of their studies into alpine fauna on the Bogong High Plains. Everyone was able to get a close look at a house mouse,(very common since the 2003 fires) a dusky antechinus, a bush rat and (he made us all wait as he left it until last) a mountain pigmy possum.
- In the Mt Kosiusko section of the alps the ANN group were shown a broad-toothed rat.

7. Jane Cleary reported that the striated pardalotes have started nesting in the bottle-gourds she has hanging in her garden.
7.2 In previous years the clamourous reed-warblers arrived in Spring and nest in the reeds that grow in the section of Bendigo Creek near her house. Last year we had enough Spring rain to flood the creek and the birds didn't arrive until early Summer after the water-level had dropped.
7.3 Kath and Peter Strickland, who were at the ANN camp, mentioned that the southern alpine area around Mt Baw Baw is very interesting and well worth visiting and that they would welcome an opportunity to show it to our club.
7.4 Dick Southcomb from the Geelong FNC was central to the organisation of the 2006 Alpine ANN camp. It was an enormous task and he and the SEANA committee must be congratulated on their achievement. The camp was a great success.
7.5 She has an almost limitless number of ANN stickers. The BFNC are invited to help themselves.

8. Rob Moors announced that the next ANN camp will held in Darwin in 2008.

9. Richard Goonan reported in January he has seen:
- A scarlet robin in the Mandurang forest
- 2 brolgas in a swampy area just north of Kamarooka. They were reported as breeding at Serpentine.
- 12 banded lapwings in a paddock north of Kamarooka.
9.2 In February he saw 2 wedge-tailed eagles flying over Mandurang, and at Bridgewater on the Loddon, he noticed a pair of wedge-tails were using a roosting platform made of sticks in a red gum to hunt from.

10. Matthew Comer, has been collecting *Dianella* berries for seed at Goldfields Revegetation, Strathfieldsaye, and has had competition for the berries from silvereyes

and yellow-faced honeyeaters. The dianellas have flowered and fruited very well this year.

11. Rob and Cynthia Watkins visited the Leeton wading bird rookery last Christmas. There was plenty of water and the birds had a successful breeding season. All 4 egret species were breeding and Rob and Cynthia promised to show the club the photographs they took as soon as they sort out the new digital technology. Rob compared the latest visit to the area with their previous visit when there was not enough water in the swamp for the birds to complete their breeding and there were a lot of foxes feeding on dead baby birds. This last season, there were very few foxes to be seen, however, there were a number of spotted-harriers that were probably preying on the fledgling birds.

Members' slide night

by Sabine Wilkens

Not only were there an amazing number of reports and observations on the night (see above), but members were also treated to an hour of Lord Howe Island slides.

Rob and Cynthia Watkins gave another tantalising slide show about the birds, the vegetation and the general history of this place (see also the article in the June 2005 issue of *Whirrakee*).
I am more determined than ever to go there soon!

Lord Howe Island owes is existence to a volcanic eruption of an underwater chain of volcanoes. The island is 12 km long and, in places, only 0.5km wide (2.5km at its widest). Six million years ago, one of the large craters collapsed and formed the current lagoon as well as the two highest points on the island, Mt Lidgberg and Mt Gower.

Only 393 visitors are allowed at any one time and this appears to have worked as a conservation measure. Rob was full of praise how the island is looked after.
It seems as soon as you step off the plane, there are interesting birds to see all around. (land rails were seen on the landing strip)

Right near the island is a steep piece of rock called Balls Pyramid. It looks inhospitable and it is hard to believe that you can get near it in a boat. Rob and Cynthia went there to look at some rare birds that only breed there (Dick Smith climbed this rock some years ago, but ordinary mortals are not allowed to do so).

Birds are seen everywhere and most are not shy. Rob and Cynthia even managed to photograph the extremely rare Lord Howe Woodhen (of which, some years ago, only 13 individuals remained). The birds seemed very trusting and this particular species fell victim to rats early during the island's settlement. Due to an active and successful captive breeding program, the numbers are now over 200.

For me, it would be the vegetation that would attract me there. So many different and wonderful palms! (the island makes an income form exporting kentia palms for indoor use) The palm forest in some places grows right up to the beach and is so dense, that you can barely read the newspaper in it. Here is where the providence petrel can be found in its nest burrow.

Rob and Cynthia took extremely interesting shots of different birds in flight, e.g. red-tailed tropic birds and providence petrels, white terns and brown noddys, beach noddys and sooty terns.
The very strange behaviour of the petrel was reportd in last year's June *Whirrakee*. Rob and Cynthia tried the calling trick once again, and, yes, the birds came and gathered close by.

What a place!

From the Mailbag
Author: Elaine Mathison

Each month the club receives a number of newsletters and magazines: some by subscription and some in exchange for Whirrakee. These are available from the club library.

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THE VICTORIAN NATURALIST(FNCV)
August 2005

"The distribution of fossil and sub-fossil records of the Eastern Pygmy-possum in Victoria": this species has a variable status through its current geographic range. It was considered that examining its prehistoric range may provide some insight into its present distribution and abundance.

"Ecology of the endangered Southern Shepherd's Purse and the associated moss mat community on Mount Alexander, Victoria": this small cool-season annual herb is now endemic to Mt. Alexander, having been lost from other Victorian sites. The study aimed to increase the limited information available on its ecology.

"Observations of the ecological impacts of Sambar in East Gippsland, Victoria, with reference to destruction of rainforest communities" reports that increasing numbers of Sambar deer are being seen in this area. Damage from browsing, antler rubbing and trampling is resulting in altered vegetation structure and prevention of regeneration.

"Bush creatures: animals observed on a Thryptomene shrub" outlines discoveries made during one year of observations in a garden setting. Almost one hundred species were recorded, including spiders, mantids, stick insects, bugs, beetles, flies, moths and butterflies, and bees and wasps.

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PARKWATCH(VNPA)
December 2005

"Reef Watchers take a dive that counts" reports on the activities of 220 volunteers around Victoria who carry out underwater surveys along the coast.

"Invasion of the resource snatchers" reveals the inceasing threat from plant and animal pests which compete with indigenous species for resources, alter ecological processes and may bring disease.

"Werribee Gorge State Park" outlines the geology of this easily accessible reserve near Bacchus Marsh, its history as a public area and the main attractions to be seen.

* * * * * * *

THE BIRD OBSERVER(BOCA)
October 2005

Birdwatching in:

- Hawaii: island of O'ahu
- Kangaroo Island
- Western Queensland National Parks: Moorrinya, Blackbraes and Boodjamulla

Challenge Bird Count 2005

* * * * * * *

Also received recently:

*The Victorian Naturalist (VFNC)
October 2005
*Geelong Naturalist (Geelong FNC)
Dec. 2005/Feb. 2006
*The Ballarat Naturalist(Ballarat FNC)
as above
*Castlemaine Naturalist (C'Maine FNC)
as above
*Field Nats News(FNCV)
Dec-Jan 2005-6

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Diary

The General, Bird Observers Group and Fauna Study Group meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

General Meetings

Wednesday, March 8 7.30pm
Neville Rosengren will talk about his project with VIC Roads in Gippsland, during which he has been visited and had lunch with the great David Attenborough himself. The reason for Sir David's visit will be explained.

Excursions
We have an exciting excursion program for 2006. The next trip is to Lerdederg Gorge (see page 3)..
Leave at 8.00am from clubrooms at Golden Square and return at 4.00pm.

Contact: Richard Goonan 0423418815

The February edition of *Whirrakee* (page 3) has the entire 2006 excursion program.

Fauna Group
This group meets (in the clubrooms) on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm.

Wednesday, March 22 7.30pm
Topic: to be determined

Fauna Excursions
Every Friday morning starting at around 9 to 9:30, the Fauna Group inspects nest boxes in the Spring Gully area. The excursions are led by Maurie Lewis, 16 Vains St. Golden Square. Phone 0407 427 179 or 5442 1813. Phone Maurie to confirm exact departure times and location. If you don't phone but go directly to Maurie's house and find nobody at the house between 9 and 9:30 then the excursion is not on.

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.
W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need.
Phone: 0419 356433.

Bendigo Field Naturalists on the web
Any comments about the site are most welcome.
http://communitysites.impulse.net.au/bendigofieldnaturalists/fnats.html

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New Edition of Box Ironbark CD
Just to let you know that the new edition of 'Plants and Animals of the Box-Ironbark Area of Central Victoria' is available at the usual price of $ 50.-

...and **Wildlife of the Box Ironbark Country by Chris Tzaros** is also still available at $ 30.-. See note on page 3 regarding a printing mistake.

Please contact Bill Holsworth if you are interested in purchasing one of these.